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A Medal for Francis Powers

Award of a Central Intelligence Agency medal to FRANCIS GARY POWERS, the Virginian who was shot down over Soviet Russia in 1960 when flying a U2 espionage plane, should go far to convince the remaining skeptics as



Powers

to POWERS' role in that internationally significant episode.

The only surprising thing about the award is that it was made in secret—and even that ought not to be particularly surprising, in view of the manner in which the CIA operates. Much that it does *has* to be secret.

The giving of the decoration to POWERS was not altogether unexpected, since he was found, after an official inquiry by a special board three years ago, to have "lived up to his obligations as an American."

POWERS also appeared at that time before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. At the conclusion he was congratulated by SENATORS BYRD, SALTONSTALL, STENNIS, JACKSON, BEALL and BUSH.

Various earlier reports concerning his instructions from the CIA turned out to be incorrect. For instance, he was *not* under

instructions to kill himself, if he fell into enemy hands. He *was* instructed — rightly or wrongly—to "adopt a co-operative attitude" toward his captors, and to "make no attempt" to deny the nature of his mission.

True, a good many of us were extremely unhappy over his telling the court at his trial in Moscow that he was "sincerely sorry that I had anything to do with this," and his further statement that he had done his country "a very ill service" in going on the flight over the USSR. He also admitted that he had "committed a grave crime."

Such assertions as these were widely remarked to be in great contrast to those of NATHAN HALE, the Revolutionary hero who regretted that he had "but one life to give for my country."

However, POWERS' declarations to the court must be viewed in the light of the brainwashing he had undergone and his instructions from the CIA. And it is altogether clear that neither the CIA, nor others who have conducted impartial inquiries into his behavior are inclined to be at all critical. On the contrary, the CIA has just decorated him.

All of which should clear up many of the remaining doubts concerning the role of FRANCIS GARY POWERS after he was shot down near Sverdlovsk, Russia, exactly five years ago last Saturday.